

**ARIZONA STATE PARKS
NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(NAPAC)**

Minutes of the meeting held:

Thursday, July 26, 2007

at:

the offices of Sky Island Alliance
738 N. Fifth Avenue
Tucson, AZ

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Hare called the meeting to order at 12:09pm. The following people were present, and the Committee achieved a quorum.

Committee Members Present: Trevor Hare, Chair
Phyllis Hughes
Don Young
Linda Kennedy
Max Castillo *ex-officio, via telephone*

Committee Members Absent: Sheridan Stone, Vice-Chair
John Hays

Other Individuals Present: Joanne Roberts, Arizona State Parks (ASP)
Ray Warriner, ASP
Steve Haas, ASP
Ruth Shulman, ASP
Diana Freshwater, Executive Director,
Arizona Open Land Trust (AOLT)
Liz Petterson, AOLT

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

Members and Staff introduced themselves.

C. OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of NAPAC Minutes for the May 24, 2007 meeting.

Dr. Young asked to be added to the "Public Comment" information as having also participated in the summer hydrology camp. Chair Hare asked about several of the items in the minutes where it was noted information was to be provided in the future, such as with the Kartchner Caverns scoping document and the GIS presentation. The GIS presentation is an agenda item for this meeting; the scoping document will have follow-up presented at a future meeting.

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Dr. Young moved that the minutes of the May 24, 2007 meeting be accepted as amended. Ms. Hughes seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

2. Discussion of the Capitan Chiquito site visit and recommendation to the ASP Board.

Ms. Roberts had distributed copies of the consolidated Evaluation Form for this parcel. The rating for the property is a "C" which is a low rating; the possible scores are A, B, C, or D. (Copies available; score information on page six.)

The major issues are floods, as well as equestrian and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trespass, as well as a lack of potential to be a functioning ecosystem. Despite the presence of water, there is no riparian area. Upstream from the flow, there is a fish barrier. Since the property is downstream, there would be no control over what flowed into the area from agriculture and home development.

There were species of fish and toads sighted which still need identification, as well as birds appropriate to the upland desert community. There is no contiguous protected property nearby. Cattle were seen walking up-and-downstream during the visit. No wells were spotted on the property.

Chair Hare noted that he didn't see the property as developable, and Mr. Warriner concurred, though he thought there might a couple of home sites that could be built. Ms. Hughes said that a Bed & Breakfast operation is working in the area, but there is still not much development. This operation also owns an orchard, and some equestrian opportunities, which may contribute to the equestrian traffic.

Chair Hare said that he does not see the property as an ASP Natural Area. Because NAPAC has already discussed buying smaller stand-alone properties for protection, he still feels that is a possibility for the future. However, the process shouldn't begin with this particular parcel.

Dr. Kennedy noted that she did not see a possibility for restoration of this property either. Mr. Warriner concurred, noting the flooding potential as well.

Ms. Roberts asked if the Committee was ready to make a formal recommendation on this property. She noted that the Heritage Data Management System (HDMS) report from AGDF has not arrived yet, but that native fish are unlikely because of the fish barrier upstream. Chair Hare asked what Mr. Stone felt about the property. Ms. Roberts noted that a lot of the information on the evaluation form was from Mr. Stone. His feeling was that the viability and defensibility of the property are practically nil, and that management of this parcel would be intensive, especially with law enforcement and hands-on operation.

Ms. Hughes noted that there are funds for acquisition, but not very many funds available for management, which would be difficult not only on this parcel, but on

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any isolated parcel purchased. The topic of purchasing isolated properties then becomes an issue for discussion in the Selection subcommittee, which is attempting to prioritize acquisitions. Chair Hare noted that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) manage much of the land upstream, so that management assistance could be had, most likely for any isolated property.

Dr. Kennedy noted that the property would be a high maintenance area to rebuild to its potential, and the limited funding would have a better, bigger impact elsewhere.

Dr. Kennedy then went on to move that NAPAC not recommend this property for acquisition to the Arizona State Parks Board. Ms. Hughes seconded the motion. Following discussion, the motion was amended to include the reasons for the lack of recommendation.

The motion to read that the Capitan Chiquito property not be purchased with Natural Areas funds for the reasons that the property does not meet the Natural Areas criteria and that the cost of maintenance would be prohibitive. Ms. Hughes maintained her second of the amended motion, which carried without further discussion.

3. Update and discussion Oracle SP deed/Defenders of Wildlife.

Dr. Young produced a document with recommended language to amend the deed restrictions on Oracle State Park. (Copies available.) The deed is currently held by the Defenders of Wildlife (DoW) organization.

Dr. Young spoke with Keeley Sinclair and Eva Sergeant of the DoW, who moved the discussion up to the organization's headquarters in Washington, DC for comment. DoW Headquarters said that they had "no problem" with amending the deed as discussed and suggested in earlier conversations with Ms. Sinclair and Ms. Sergeant. The statement was too general to proceed on, so Dr. Young spoke with Ms. Hernbrode, the Assistant Attorney General for ASP, about drafting some suggested language. Ms. Hernbrode also noted that any proposed changes would need to be approved by the ASP Board. Dr. Young then drafted a paragraph for NAPAC review, comment, and revision, if necessary.

Ms. Roberts noted that any amendments to the deed must primarily serve the needs of Oracle State Park. For example, the current deed says that ASP may not authorize hunting, trapping or intentional killing of native wildlife except as relates to the protection of public health. The deed specifies that if these activities occur for any reason outside the protection of public health, the property will revert back to DoW. Ms. Roberts also noted prohibitions against OHVs, management by fire, and revising the deed itself, which would also cause reversion of the property. There are issues on the park with invasive species so floral and faunal inventories must occur, as well as projects that could be undertaken as appropriate for an environmental education park. Any verbiage would need to embrace the wider scope of Oracle SP's needs for the long term.

Dr. Kennedy suggested that the current verbiage "...eradicating undesirable species of animals or plants..." may be troublesome. She suggested changing the wording to read: "...exotic (non-native) invasive species..." Ms. Roberts noted that the verbiage might be taken directly from the documents of the Governor's Invasive Species Council. The actual report to the Governor is 20 pages long, however the definition of "invasive species" could be taken from the document. Dr. Kennedy also noted that removing the phrase "animals or plants" would also allow for fungi or other non-animal, non-plant species.

Dr. Young noted that he wants comments and suggestions for reworking the paragraph. He will then include the changes and do the rewrite, following which he will send the document to Ms. Hernbrode for her review.

Ms. Hughes noted that was under the impression that NAPAC was primarily looking for "buy-in" on the issues caused by scientific studies without actually changing the deed. Especially in light of the deed restriction that specifies that the property reverts if the deed is changed. There may be unforeseen circumstances occurring if the amendment takes place. Dr. Young said that he was expecting more comments from Ms. Hernbrode.

After further discussion it was suggested that NAPAC seek a letter of agreement from DoW after obtaining permission for that course of action from ASP Executive Director Ken Travous. Ms. Roberts will discuss the matter further with Ms. Hernbrode.

4. Discuss Kingsley resignation and candidate recruitment.

Ms. Shulman provided members with hard copies of the resignation letter and Dr. Kingsley's response, noting that Dr. Kingsley had responded well. She also handed out the updated documents provided by Jared Underwood, the only previous candidate to respond to an inquiry into which candidates remained interested in serving. She noted that any appointment to NAPAC would need to be brought to the ASP Board for their September agenda. Since only the subcommittees meet in August, the decision should be made now.

Chair Hare noted that Mr. Underwood had received "high scores" when the application were originally reviewed by NAPAC last year. NAPAC members discussed Mr. Underwood and his application and agreed that he should be appointed to complete Dr. Kingsley's term.

Chair Hare moved that NAPAC forward to the Arizona State Parks Board an acknowledgment of Dr. Kingsley's resignation, as well a recommendation that Jared Underwood be appointed to complete Dr. Kingsley's term. Dr. Kennedy seconded the motion, which carried without further discussion. Ms. Shulman will prepare a recommendation notice for the ASP Board to be included on their September agenda.

5. Presentation and discussion of SCSNA by Steve Haas, SCSNA Manager.

Steven Haas made a Powerpoint presentation (copies available) updating NAPAC members on the SCSNA since it opened last November. There are three topics in particular to be addressed: 1) fencing, 2) fish removal with AGFD, and 3) the hunting season just past.

Mr. Haas began by showing NAPAC a map of the SCSNA and surrounding region, noting the landholders and land managers (such as AGFD and Arizona State Trust Land [ASLD]) in the vicinity. Several land purchases by ASP make up the Natural Area, which includes Coal Mine Springs. ASP also leases some ASLD land on which there is also a grazing lease; and there are some purchased rights-of-way on trails. The Coal Mine Springs area is of interest particularly because of the endangered Gila Topminnow. Altogether, ASP manages approximately 9,000 acres.

There are six working ranches around the Natural Area, which creates issues with trespass cattle. This is especially a problem because the Natural Area contains much of the available water. There were no fences erected when the property was originally purchased, so installing fences became a priority. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and AGFD were instrumental in helping to begin the fencing project. The NRCS's Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) provided a grant to cover some of the costs of erecting the fence.

Ms. Hughes mentioned the southern property line, and some of the issues that arose during the original purchase of the land. Mr. Haas noted that the line more or less runs through the center of the creek, and therefore shifts on occasion. As it stands now, there are still discussions ongoing with the Sonoita Creek Ranch Home Owners Association, which owns much of the property, and maintain a small herd of cattle to obtain an agriculture tax status for its owners. ASP also owns some property within the Sonoita Creek Ranch, and is an HOA member. Further discussion followed on the Sonoita Creek Ranch property line and the boundaries.

The current fence runs from the Morning Star Ranch down to Sonoita Creek through Fresno Canyon, some of the most rugged country around the Natural Area. The fence erected met some exacting specifications: 4-strand barbed wire, with the bottom row of wire on the fence being smooth (16-24-32-44"), metal T-posts every 30 feet, metal braces set less than every 1/4 mile, two stays between T-posts.

The Coconino Rural Environmental Corp (CREC,) an Americorps group out of Flagstaff built the fence itself. The group spent a total of 40 weeks, and the works were young, hardworking and educable. Mr. Haas and SCSNA staff spent time on education, which is also a component of the Americorps experience. Mr. Warriner asked if the SCSNA would work with the group again; Mr. Haas said he would, and that the group would return under a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant from ASP to do some trail maintenance.

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The total fence is 8.5 miles (45,000 linear feet) long. The cost breakdown is: CREC, \$191,721.60; and materials, \$47,482.12 for a total of \$239,203.72. With a reimbursement under the WHIP grant of \$135,000, the cost to ASP was \$104,203.72 or \$2.31/linear foot. The reimbursement process began after the NRCS inspected the fence to ensure it met the specifications. Mr. Warriner suggested that the Regional Manager for ASP as well as the Executive Staff should be made aware of the savings SCSNA made on this project. Dr. Kennedy also said that the project would have been even less expensive if the land had been less rugged, which should also be made clear.

There are two more phases to be completed in the fencing project: one is to replace an existing 75-year old fence, and the second is to fence the southern boundary as much as possible. The cost to replace the 75-year old fence would be approximately \$5,000. As far as the southern boundary, Mr. Haas noted that it would be okay at this point to let the contract expire. Some discussion followed on approaching the County Board of Supervisor to perhaps grant some tax relief on the agricultural tax status to the HOA, which would make them more amenable to fencing. Further discussion on tax relief for conservation easement followed; some of which depends on the original tax assessor in any particular county. Mr. Haas said that fencing may not be the ultimate solution to the trespass cattle problem. The upkeep on fencing alone is cost prohibitive, and with the flooding issues there are lots of repairs necessary. Another issue is that since most of the water in the area is in the Natural Area, some of the ranchers have no compunction about cutting through fences or opening gates to allow their cattle to reach the water. This situation may be handled with further education of the leaseholder there.

The Fresno Canyon Renovation was conducted to remove the non-native Green Sunfish from springs within Fresno Canyon. The AGFD transplanted approximately 1200 Gila Topminnow from Fresno Canyon to Coal Mine Springs before the treatment to remove the fish downstream. A piscicide was applied over a two-day period, killing the Green Sunfish. As of now, there are no fish in the springs below Coal Mine Spring, but the expectation is that the Gila Topminnow will begin to migrate since the "system" is running. There are Sonoran Turtles at the moment, as well as some other wildlife. Mr. Haas also says that there is a natural fish barrier in the form of a large rock. Chair Hare asked if there were also Bullfrogs and Crayfish in the area.

With regard to hunting on the SCSNA, currently it is allowed on all property either owned or managed by ASP/SCSNA. The major issues have been problems with the OHVs hunters use, fences are cut or otherwise damaged, and permits and fees can be difficult to collect. However, most of the hunters are happy that the area remains open to hunting, stick to the roads and trails, and are generally good citizens. OHV use is prohibited in the NA, and OHV hunters are cited when they are caught riding. Ms. Roberts asked if the hunters have problems with the permit system instituted for entry into the NA. Mr. Haas said that the problems with that have been minimal. The main issue seems to be that, because hunting season

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overlaps with the presence of seasonal birders, there have been a few interactions. Several complaints have come from the birders, with whom there is an educational opportunity to explain that hunting is allowed.

Ms. Hughes asked about possible liability if the birders/hikers are unaware of the hunters' presence. Mr. Haas said that the information is posted on all kiosks during the hunting season, and that most interactions are likely to take place along Sonoita Creek, near the trails. For the most part, however, hunters are not near the trails, so the interactions are few. Ms. Roberts also mentioned that there are regulations prohibiting hunters from coming within a certain distance of buildings, trails, etc. She noted that just as there is a birding ethic, there is also a hunting ethic that the majority of hunters subscribe to. Mr. Haas said that the hunting has not become a major issue on the NA.

Mr. Haas went on to say that the NA opened officially on November 3, 2006. There are 20 miles of trails and three backcountry campsites, which are unique in the state parks system. There are Mountain Lions spotted on the SCSNA from time to time, and at least two mating pairs have been seen. There has also been at least one Coati seen.

Dr. Young asked about any issues with illegal immigrant traffic. Mr. Haas said that there is no problem; the property runs the wrong way.

Ms. Roberts thanked Mr. Haas for his time on the presentation and the update to NAPAC.

Chair Hare asked about giving consideration to thinking about hunting in the riparian area of the NA, as well as predator hunting, which may not be appropriate within the NA. Further discussion followed on the hunting views of the AGFD Commission, as well as the need for hunting to be managed on the SCSNA through a site-specific management plan. He also noted that weapons might be prohibited on the NA. However Mr. Castillo noted that since Arizona is an "open carry" state, ASP would need to provide a safe gun-locker for those who do carry weapons if we wanted to prohibit guns in the NA.

Mr. Warriner noted that a 260-acre parcel previously purchased came with a stipend of \$200,000 over a five-year period with a promise to deed over the site for a ranger residence and a visitor center. However, that piece of land has been reclassified into the flood-plain and will most likely not be suitable for building. The Cooperation Agreement will be extended for another four year, but mostly likely without an extension of the stipend. ASP will be looking at an alternate site, perhaps where the developer has a land sale office, directly off the I-17.

(NAPAC broke at 2:00pm and reconvened at 2:11pm.)

6. Update and discussion on hunting within State Parks.

Ms. Hernbrode provided NAPAC with information she gathered from various agencies in other states that are responsible for Natural Areas within those states. (Copies available.) NAPAC had been expecting more information on how other states handle hunting issues within their own state parks.

The information received demonstrates the need for management guidelines, with site-specific considerations on the hunting issue built in. Ms. Roberts said that each state manages their natural areas differently, but that many state natural areas use hunting as a management tool. The charge to each natural area management agency is different in every state, as are the management agencies themselves, for the most part.

There followed discussion on the problems of shooting, and contacts between hunters and birders on ASP's Natural Areas.

Ms. Roberts noted that she felt the contacts between birders and other recreationists could be managed, and that those contacts should not be a reason to forego hunting as a management tool.

7. Update and discussion on Huggett Properties acquisition status.

Mr. Warriner noted that he had been in touch with the property owner, who agreed to the purchase contract. ASP Executive Director Ken Travous signed the agreement and escrow has been opened. The actual purchase price has yet to be definitively determined, but remains between \$8,000-\$9,000 dollars. The property was appraised at \$325,000.

As of yet no decision has been made on what action to take with the existing Conservation Easement. Mr. Warriner said he received differing opinions on whether or not the easement would automatically extinguish once ASP completed the purchase. The Arizona Open Land Trust (AOLT) has no opinion either way. However, this issue probably best addressed once ASP becomes the owner of the property.

8. GIS Project update.

Ms. Roberts advised that the GIS Project presentation had been requested for this NAPAC meeting as well as the prior meeting. The IT team responsible for the project says that the GIS product is still in development and unavailable for presentations, however a list of data layers is available. Part of the goal of this project is the develop a method to integrate plans and data sets for use in Open Space/Growing Smarter programs mandated by law. The IT team is working directly with AGFD in developing the product.

The presentation is now planned for the September NAPAC meeting. Ms. Roberts will supply NAPAC with more information before that meeting, if at all possible.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss possible acquisition of Peck's Lake through Phelps-Dodge divestiture.
(Note: the Freeport-McMoRan [yes, that's the official spelling] Company recently purchased Phelps-Dodge, but for purposes of this discussion they will continue to be referred to as Phelps-Dodge.)

Mr. Warriner and Mr. Castillo provided NAPAC with map copies and handouts regarding the Peck's Lake area. (Copies available.) Peck's Lake is a human-created oxbow in the Verde River located near the Tuzigoot National Monument and the Tavasci Marsh. Phelps-Dodge had at one time cut off a part of the lake to create a "tailings" pile for cast-off from the mine located near Jerome, Arizona. These tailings are a concern for the health of the lake and the nearby marsh. However, Phelps-Dodge has recently been at work leveling the tailings, covering them over with a slurry wall and planting vegetation over the site. (Mr. Castillo believes that the vegetation being planted is sterile oats.)

Several attempts to develop the property near the lake have fallen through, possibly due to the pollution concerns arising from the mining waste. Phelps-Dodge is taking steps to mitigate the problem, however. There are tailings to deal with, a capping process, and the slagheap. The actual condition of the lake varies greatly from time to time depending on what the river is doing. The tailings are a sub-channel component. We do not know the status of the ADEQ clean up work and what responsibilities are being assigned to the capping or whether the re-seeding is with native plants.

At this time, Dr. Young moved to table this topic until further information is available and that a site visit would be appropriate before further discussion. Mr. Warriner indicated that perhaps two site visits would be needed before the next meeting, the Whitewater property and VRG properties. Chair Hare seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

2. Discuss and set schedule for site visits to properties near the VRG.

The Selection subcommittee members and other interested NAPAC members are encouraged to contact Mr. Warriner with a list of available dates for future site visits. The site visits will include several parcels along the Verde River as possible acquisitions for the VRG as well as the Whitewater Draw area discussed below. Mr. Warriner will coordinate the dates, set a schedule and communicate that schedule with NAPAC. There may be sites along the Verde River upriver from the VRG as well.

3. Hiring announcement of new ecologist for ASP and her duties relative to NAPAC.

Ms. Roberts announced the hiring of Ariel Hiller, currently in Oregon, as the new Resource Ecologist for ASP. Ms. Hiller graduated from Northern Arizona University. Her position will be lateral with Ms. Roberts and they will divide the state geographically between them. Ms. Hiller's office will be housed at the VRG, and she will take the lead in ASP's involvement with The Nature Conservancy's CAP program as it pertains to the VRG.

Among Ms. Hiller's skills and experiences are: knowledge of GPS techniques, work with restoration programs, invasive plants, and volunteer coordination. She will be available to assist NAPAC as 10% of her duties. Initially she will focus on being the technical advisor for the VRG.

4. Presentation by Diana Freshwater of Arizona Open Land Trust regarding a possible acquisition and discussion.

Ms. Freshwater gave a brief historical overview of the AOLT, and its involvement in protecting sensitive areas in southern Arizona since 1978. The AOLT has been active in the Whitewater Draw area since 2005, partnering with private landowners, the AGFD, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in various conservation efforts. Many of the private property owners have implemented conservation easements on their properties. Ms. Freshwater distributed a map of the Whitewater Draw area showing various layers of information on ownerships, habitats, and waterways. (Copy available.)

Ms. Pettersen then conducted a "tour" of the map and its many GIS information layers, and gave some of the history of the Cowan family, who currently own some of the property under discussion, as well as the Sandhill Farms, LLC.

The particular properties under discussion today are a total of 2,613 acres currently belonging to the Cowan family as well as a consortium of private owners making up Sandhill Farms, LLC (940 acres belonging to Sandhill Farms, LLC, 1,673 acres belonging to Cowan.) Further discussion followed on the good stewardship history of many of the current owners in the area. Ms. Petterson also noted that there are several property owners nearby that are possibly interested in implementing conservation easements on their properties.

Ms. Petterson also noted some of the species known to be present, including Javelina, Mule Deer, Canadian Geese, Snow Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and other waterfowl. She noted that some biologists say that the habitat has potential for Jaguar. The Chiricuaha Leopard Frog, Sonoran Tiger Salamander and Southwest Willow Flycatcher are special status species important to the area.

Ms. Hughes asked what sort of development is occurring on those properties marked on the map as "under development". Ms. Petterson answered that she believes 40-acre ranchettes are being put in. She did not know the name of the

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developer but would be able to find out for NAPAC, as well as other information on the developments. Ms. Hughes also asked about whether the AGFD Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area was a purchase. Ms. Petterson noted that AGFD manages the area under conservation easements, and that AGFD would be willing to manage other nearby properties implementing conservation easements. Further discussion followed on various block areas on the map.

Ms. Freshwater said that AOLT is also in discussion with other landowners in the area, and that there is a good chance that other properties owned by the Cowan family may be available in the future.

Chair Hare asked about the location of the experimental watershed nearby. Dr. Kennedy said that it is located right outside of Tombstone. Dr. Young noted that he had done the hydrological examination of the original AGFD acquisition in the area, so the information should be available if needed or desired by AOLT.

Ms. Petterson noted that The Nature Conservancy called the grasslands of high importance, and noted that in the Sandhill Farms area there is a grouping of Yellow-leaf Willow (though this plant name is not familiar). Chair Hare supplied more information on the possibility of Jaguar in the area.

Ms. Hughes asked if the Cowan property was still an active ranch. Ms. Freshwater said that the properties are mostly wetlands, especially in the Sandhill Farms area. The Cowans still own a few cattle, but it is no longer a ranching operation. There is one historic adobe structure adjacent to the Cowan property, which will come up for sale in the near future. This structure was part of the old stagecoach system in southern Arizona.

Chair Hare noted that there are a lot of conservation-minded ranchers nearby associated with the Malpai Borderlands Group (MBG). Ms. Freshwater said that these ranchers had originally approached the MBG and were told they were located too far west.

Ms. Roberts asked about the Wildlife Habitat Plan for Sandhill Farms, and whether it would be possible to get a copy of that plan. Ms. Freshwater said that a copy could be obtained through AGFD. Some of the nearby private property owners are "on board" with the plan, and conversations are being held with others.

Ms. Hughes asked about the access to the properties. Ms. Freshwater noted that access is on Frontier Road north from the Davis Road. This is a sandy road dedicated to access to the properties. Ms. Freshwater noted that it is unknown whether there is an access easement in place, but that information could be found out. Mr. Warriner suggested contacting the County.

Dr. Young asked about where NAPAC fits into this discussion, especially with regards to a conservation easement. Ms. Freshwater said that the property owners

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are not interested in selling outright, as they would prefer to maintain the title to the property. However, they are interested in establishing a conservation easement that would allow hunting, perhaps some “hobby” cows, and restoring the wetlands. Mr. Warriner noted that hunting is a particular issue for NAPAC, and should be addressed on a site-specific basis. Chair Hare noted that there are also grazing concerns that NAPAC addresses on a site-specific basis.

Ms. Roberts asked if this area would fall under the “scenic area” classification for Natural Areas. Following further discussion, NAPAC arrived at the consensus that these properties fell into the “ecosystem” classification.

Ms. Hughes asked about the role of AOLT in these matters. Ms. Freshwater said that AOLT brings together willing sellers (of either land or conservation easements) with funding sources to achieve conservation and protection. She discussed some of the funding available to landowners who are conservation minded, such as the Landowner Incentive Program through AGFD and the Family Ranchland Protection Fund, established by the AOLT. This latter fund enables landowners to conduct due diligence and help them make good decisions regarding their land.

Ms. Freshwater also noted that the AOLT requests voluntary donations from sellers to help cover their time. These transactions are completely transparent to all interested parties. Ms. Freshwater enlarged up some of the recent transactions AOLT with which had been involved, and how their process works, including on occasion asking sellers to reimburse due diligence fees.

Mr. Warriner asked who holds the conservation easement on the 47 Ranch property. Ms. Freshwater said that AOLT holds that easement. Dr. Kennedy asked if the easement was monitored, and what steps are used. Ms. Freshwater said that the protocol calls for twice-yearly visits, as well as photographic monitoring via satellite imagery. The easement restricts development and protects two springs. Dr. Kennedy asked about vegetation monitoring occurring on this property, which it currently does not. Dr. Kennedy asked about what type of protection is available for the future. Ms. Freshwater said that the conservation easement is tied to the plan in place through NRCS and must remain in the same condition.

Dr. Kennedy asked who would hold the easement on the property under discussion. Ms. Freshwater said that AOLT could hold it, or perhaps AGFD, since they have offered to manage at least part of the property. Mr. Warriner noted that ASP may have to hold the easement. Dr. Kennedy asked if another state agency could manage the property on behalf of ASP. Ms. Roberts noted that generally, ASP manages AGFD land.

Ms. Hughes asked whether AOLT charges a fee for monitoring. Ms. Freshwater that normally, AOLT asks for an endowment to help pay for monitoring on properties. The landowner generally pays for the endowment.

Dr. Kennedy asked about the dollar amount for the easement. Ms. Freshwater noted that the discussions are in a preliminary phase, and no price has been set. A nearby property was recently appraised and the conservation easement price set at \$500/acre. Mr. Warriner asked if that was a percentage of fee value; Ms. Freshwater said she thought perhaps 65%, but could find out more definitively.

Chair Hare noted that AOLT has been active in conservation in Pima County, and has been very good to work with.

Ms. Freshwater and Ms. Petterson wrapped up their presentation by asking that NAPAC consider the area, especially since the synergy is so good for conservation at the moment. They will be able to answer questions for NAPAC as they arise, and will provide the answers to questions asked during this presentation to Ruth Shulman.

Chair Hare encouraged the Selection subcommittee and other interested NAPAC members to choose a site visit date to the property.

5. Update on site visit to Erck property and discussion.

Mr. Warriner thanked the Committee members who attended the site visit.

The rating for the property was 66% B and 33% A. Chair Hare said he likes the property; there was a possibility he saw a river otter there. Another plus is the immature riparian vegetation because that demonstrates the presence of an active channel of the river. There are also some old cottonwood-willows along the drainage. Mr. Erck noted that he had never seen a flood that came over the riverbank on the property. Chair Hare said that even if a flood rose over the banks and carried away the young trees that might not be a disaster.

The property is bounded on the east and west sides by US Forest Service land. The major problems are OHV trespass, mobile home trespass and pits. IT was suggested that "pinch-points" could be fenced to restrict access.

Dr. Young said that old trees indicate an energy loss (????) but also shows hydrologic stability. There is little recent evidence of bank cutting by the river. There is also an unusual feature of minor sand dunes created by previous flooding.

It was noted that there are some tamarisk trees to be removed, and that the volunteers who do this work on the VRG could be of some help on this property if it were acquired. Ms. Roberts said that the native plant species are nicely mixed. Chair Hare also said that some Johnsongrass was spotted on the property.

Ms. Hughes asked how the property would fit into the NA criteria. Ms. Roberts said it represents a significant ecosystem. There is an HDMS search pending and that information will be available once the report is received. River otters, if they

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are on the property, are a sensitive species listed with AGFD. Dr. Kennedy said that the property fits under the “contributing ecosystem” criteria as well. Ms. Roberts noted that the property could easily meet four of the five criteria.

Dr. Kennedy asked about the price of the property. Mr. Warriner said that the property had not yet been appraised. Mr. Erck is a willing seller. Mr. Warriner said that a ballpark estimate could be based on the most recent ASP purchase in the VRG area, which cost approximately \$24,500/acre. At \$30,000/acre, this property could be purchased for \$435,000. There is a price range in which ASP and the seller can work together. The next step is to conduct the due diligence.

Chair Hare moved to recommend to the Arizona State Parks Board for acquisition the Erck parcel for purposes of conserving the riparian riverine connectivity between two parcels of US Forest Service land, and because the parcel meets (*criteria 1-2-3-4*) eligibility under the May 26, 2004 approved criteria and is consistent with ARS §41-501.1, and that this recommendation be forwarded to the Arizona State Parks Board for final action. Dr. Young seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

6. Update on ASP Board meeting attended by Trevor Hare and Don Young.

Chair Hare and Dr. Young attended the recent ASP Board meeting at Red Rocks State Park. NAPAC items were not on the Board agenda, however.

E. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Natural Areas Management Guidelines (NAMG) committee: Update and report on progress.

At the last meeting Mr. Stone provided a Table of Contents for the Department of Defense management plan, which has proved to be a good framework on which to build ASP’s plan. Ms. Roberts provided a copy of the draft Table of Contents for the ASP Management Guidelines for comment.

2. Update from Selection subcommittee including discussion.

The Selection subcommittee would like to continue to make progress in devising a way to prioritize possible acquisitions. Their August meeting will focus on carrying on the discussions.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

G. BOARD COMMENTS, REQUESTS, AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Future agenda items: Scoping document, GIS presentation, Oracle/Defenders, Huggett update, Peck’s Lake update, consider limiting outside presentations to 10-15 minutes,

Final Minutes
Meeting of 7/26/07

grant writing/ASP applying for grants (possible for December) and further information on hunting from Ms. Hernbrode.

H. TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Subcommittee meetings in August: Selection subcommittee, August 21 2007, 10:00am, ASP offices, Phoenix; NAMG subcommittee, August 23 (or 22), 2007, 10:00am, Kartchner Caverns State Park.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hare adjourned the meeting at 4:29pm.

Prepared by Ruth Shulman on August 7, 2007, and reviewed by Joanne M. Roberts, Arizona State Parks NAPAC Coordinator, on September 10, 2007.

APPROVED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2007.

Affirmed by:

/s/ Trevor Hare
Trevor Hare, Chair

Date: November 29, 2007